

WATERVILLE CITY COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING/WORK SESSION  
February 29, 2016, 7:00 P.M.

There was a special meeting/work session of the Waterville City Council held in Council Chambers at 7:00 p.m. on February 29, 2016 to discuss Fire Chief Chris Meskan's report to Council.

Present: Vail, Schmidtke, Wollin, McIntyre and Mayor Mihalik;

Absent: None

Also Present: Administrator/Clerk Teresa Hill, Jason Moran City Attorney, and Fire Chief Meskan

Also Absent: Jason Femrite of Bolton & Menk

**1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance.** Mayor Mihalik called the meeting to order noting that all Council was present. Also present was Teresa Hill, Administrator/Clerk, City Attorney Jason Moran and Fire Chief Meskan. Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**2. Approval of Agenda.** Motion by McIntyre, seconded by Schmidtke to approve the agenda. Unanimous vote. Motion carried.

**3. Report – Chief Meskan.** Chief Meskan presented Council with the history of the Waterville Fire Department, the areas that are covered by the Fire Department and the calls that were responded to in 2014 and 2015 and the number of hours spent in training. Chief Meskan advised that he and Ms. Hill wrote the Policy Manual in 2007 with help from the Fire Service. Mr. McIntyre, Ms. Hill and the Fire Board Members went through the Policy Manual and condensed and updated the Department Policy Manual on training and operations and human resources personnel policies. Council will be approving the Department Policy Manual. Chief Meskan said that there is now a HR Committee that will be beneficial to the Department. Matt Duhme volunteered to represent the Fire Department on the HR Committee. Chief Meskan advised Council that members of the Officer Team attended the Fire Officer School in Alexandria and went to Leadership Classes. Chief Meskan also attended the classes. Chief Meskan discussed medical protocols for the Fire Department and Police Department. Police Chief Manning and Fire Chief Meskan will be working on the medical protocols between the two departments. The medical director suggested doing some medical training scenarios between the two departments. The Police Department does have 1<sup>st</sup> Responder training. Dennis Androli compiled a list of resources for the Fire Department that can be used in the event of emergencies. The list of resources will also be provided to the dispatch center. The list consisted of contact telephone numbers, the City and County equipment, Contractors and tree and boom services. Ms. Vail suggested that the list of resources also be discussed at the Le Sueur County Officials meeting as well as with Ann Traxler. Chief Meskan said that he does attend Fire Chiefs meetings where they also have a list of resources within the fire departments. Chief Meskan said that training is very important to the Fire Department. They keep current on NFPA, ISO, OSHA and state mandated training. Chief Meskan has obtained reimbursement for the mandated training. Matt Duhme is the training coordinator and keeps the training records up to date that the state mandates. Matt Duhme presented Council with an overview of the training

requirements, the cost of training, and Minnesota fire service facts. The Fire Department requires inside and outside training. Members are required to meet 60% of all trainings. Each licensed firefighter is responsible for his/her documentation of the 72 hour continuing education training in the previous three-year period for license renewal. The Minnesota Board of Firefighter Training and Education funding has provided a significant amount of reimbursement for the Waterville Fire Department's training expenses. Chief Meskan said he would like to obtain training props and places to hold the training. Chief Meskan gave Council different examples of some of their training sessions. Discussion held regarding mock disaster training. Chief Meskan said that they had an ISO rating and it was dropped a point and a half. This helps lower the insurance rate for the residents. Chief Meskan said that he does a one on one interview annually. This is a helpful tool. He uses the information for the betterment of all involved. Chief Meskan suggested that there should be department head leadership meetings. Mayor Mihalik said that he will be scheduling those meetings every two months with the department heads. Chief Meskan discussed recruitment and retention. Mr. McIntyre said on the recruitment and retention bringing everything into the HR Committee they will be able to work on that and Mr. Duhme will be a good asset. Mr. McIntyre said he has a lot of material on it and the HR Committee can really build that for the Fire Department. Chief Meskan said they do have some vacancies that they want to fill. Chief Meskan said that to be on the Fire Department you have to make a commitment because you have to take a good chunk of your life to do it. Chief Meskan suggested some incentive ideas to help retain the fire fighters. Mr. Moran suggested performance based incentives and it is paid out as you go along as opposed to here is your retirement. You make so many fire calls or you have been with the department 5 years we are going to give you an incentive for the time and effort that you have put into it. Chief Meskan said what can we do to entice recruits to stick it out? Chief Meskan suggested having a work out center for the fire fighters and the whole City. Discussion held regarding grants for a health and fitness center. Chief Meskan said that the future needs of the fire department are to update old/outdated equipment. Chief Meskan went through a list of equipment that needs to be replaced i.e. current engine, air and light truck, compressor for air, ATV/Trailer, personal protection equipment (turn out gear) and SCBA's. Chief Meskan said that the Fire Department received \$127,636.00 in grant monies to purchase some of the equipment. Today grants cannot be relied on to purchase the equipment needed. Mr. McIntyre said with the new vehicles etc. something should be done to have a foam system available. Chief Meskan presented the history of the current fire station. Since 1988 the department fleet has grown from 7 pieces of equipment to 13 pieces of equipment. Not only has the amount almost doubled, but the size of the fire apparatus has as well. Chief Meskan said we need to address the space issues. Chief Meskan said we need to look into remodeling and expansion to the current facility; this is preferred because of our central location in town. Ms. Vail said we should look at the facility and discuss an expansion at the budget sessions. Chief Meskan will present a five year plan and hopefully it can be implemented on. Chief Meskan invited Council to come to the Fire Department and check out the equipment and the facility. Chief Meskan said that we have firefighters that the City should be very proud of. Mr. McIntyre said he thinks with the changes that we are going to make moving forward with the operating manual and the training and bringing Matt Duhme into the HR Committee we can get into the recruitment and retention we can really blossom this really nice. That way you have resources that they can research and do things to support this department really well. Ms. Vail thanked Chief Meskan for working with Mr. McIntyre and thank you to all of the firefighters. Chief Meskan thanked Mr. McIntyre

saying that he was a great help on the operating manual. Mayor Mihalik said that Chief Meskan had mentioned that there had been issues for many years, but hands down this is the best department briefing/meeting that he has experienced in the last 3 ½ years. Thank you to Chief Meskan's team. Mr. Wollin said one big step in moving forward is not looking back so we need to put that behind and everybody work together.

**4. Adjourn.** Motion by Mihalik, seconded by Schmidtke to adjourn. Unanimous vote. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned 8:35 p.m.

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Stephen Mihalik, Mayor

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Teresa Hill, Administrator/Clerk